

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCE-00 EB-08 ACDA-12 IO-13
/116 W

-----041362 270128Z /73

R 261636Z JAN 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1039
INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ETRN, EAIR, XJ, CU, UR, AO
SUBJECT: RECENT CUBAN TRANSPORTATION ACQUISITIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS:
AN AFRICAN CONNECTION?

1. THE CUBAN PRESS IN RECENT DAYS HAS ANNOUNCED THE FOLLOWING
TRANSPORTATION ACQUISITIONS WHICH, THOUGH POSSIBLY ORIENTED
TOWARD TOURISM, WILL ALSO BOOST CUBAN CAPACITY TO TRANSPORT
MILITARY PERSONNEL TO AFRICA.

2. GRANMA, JANUARY 25, ANNOUNCES THAT CUBA HAS ACQUIRED
FROM AN UNIDENTIFIED SOURCE A 7.2 THOUSAND TON PASSENGER
VESSEL WITH CAPACITY FOR 873 PASSENGERS AND A SPEED OF 18
KNOTS.

3. GRANMA, JANUARY 19, ANNOUNCED THE ARRIVAL OF SECOND OF
FOUR IL-62M PASSENGER AIRCRAFT PURCHASED FROM SOVIET UNION.
THE FIRST CUBAN IL-62M, WITH CAPACITY OF 163 PASSENGERS, HAS
BEEN USED TO FLIGHTS TO BERLIN AND LUANDA. CUBANA DE AVIACION
ALSO HAS OTHER IL-62M'S LEASED FROM THE USSR.

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4. WITH REGARD TO OTHER TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS,
GRANMA, JANUARY 18, ANNOUNCES THAT ANGOLAN TAAG AIRLINE
WILL BEGIN REGULAR HAVANA-LUANDA SERVICE, JANUARY 29. ONE
STOP WILL BE MADE ENROUTE AT SAL ISLAND, CAPE VERDE.
(COMMENT: REGULAR SERVICE WAS SUPPOSED TO BEGIN IN
NOVEMBER--SEE 77 HAVANA 521--BUT APPARENTLY HAS BEEN DELAYED.)

5. DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS CONTINUE TO NOTE USE OF AEROFLOT MOSCOW FLIGHTS HERE BY CUBAN PERSONNEL IN TRANSIT TO AFRICA. SINCE MID-DECEMBER, GROUPS OF CUBANS, BOTH MALE AND FEMALE, IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES WITH IDENTICAL BLUE CLOTH SUITCASES HAVE BEEN SEEN BOARDING VARIOUS AEROFLOT FLIGHTS (WHICH TRANSIT LISBON OR FRANKFURT ENROUTE.) USINT OFFICER WAS TOLD BY MEMBER OF ONE GROUP, OF DISTINCTLY NON-MILITARY APPEARANCE, THAT PASSENGERS WERE BOUND FOR ANGOLA. (COMMENT: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HIGHLY VISIBLE GROUPS IN TRANSIT TO AFRICA MAY BE PART OF 2600 MEMBER CUBAN CIVILIAN INCREMENT PROMISED TO ANGOLA FOR 1978, PLUS REPLACEMENTS FOR OTHER CIVILIANS WHO ARE NOW BEING ROTATED AFTER COMPLETION OF 12-14 MONTH TOURS. PRESENCE OF WOMEN AND NON-MILITARY APPEARANCE OF GROUPS TENDS TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS NOTION. TRANSIT THROUGH MOSCOW MAY SUGGEST THAT SOVIET UNION OR COMECON IS PAYING TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES.) GLASSMAN

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